Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MAURITIUS.

Plague in Port Louis.

[No. 63.]

THE UNITED STATES CONSULATE,
Port Louis, Mauritius, February 14, 1899.

SIR: In confirmation of my cablegram to the Department, dated the 8th instant, I have now the honor to further report the official announcement of the existence of plague in Mauritius, and the supposed cause of the introduction of this dreaded malady, which is attributed to the great number of rats brought here from India in vessels trading with the islands.

I may remark in this connection that during the past three years that this terrible calamity has been devastating the population of India it has been always found that sooner or later the scourge would reach this island. Finally, on January 25 of this year, the first case of genuine plague was discovered at Port Louis, and which, after the due analysis of the blood of the victim, was declared by the health commission to be a true case of plague, and from which the victim died a most excruciating death twenty-four hours after having been attacked.

All the suspects have been removed from the affected quarter to a quarantine station in the suburbs of Port Louis, and there is much excitement among the poor and unfortunate population of the town.

For the past two years the so-called press of the colony has kept up a sort of a general howl about the plague, tending more to frighten this ignorant, half-civilized and half-starved mass of humanity into a state of mind that would naturally affect more robust constitutions and less excitable temperaments, without even suggesting any practical movement to prevent the introduction or spread of the plague in the colony until the reality has to be faced.

It is true that in the interim, the legislative council had passed some quarantine ordinances, which, it seems, tend more to embarrass shipping, than to prevent the introduction or spread of contagious diseases. Whilst, on the other hand, the municipality of Port Louis had been talking a great deal but doing very little toward the cleansing of the town which is admitted to be one of the most unhealthy and most filthy towns in the whole world.

The population of Port Louis is said to be between 65,000 and 70,000 souls, made up out of the very lowest grades of Creoles, Asiatics of nearly every type, and the very worst specimens of negroes. None of the better class of the population and but very few white people reside in Port Louis.

This mass of humanity is packed together in the lower part of the town, like sardines in a box, where there is no drainage or other sanitary accommodations and the only outlet for the human excrements is by carting the offal outside the town, where after undergoing a crude chemical process, it is sold as a manure to the plantations. It can hardly be doubted that unless some immediate and drastic steps are taken to remedy the existing state of things in Port Louis that the town, and especially at this, the extremely hot and damp season of the year, will become a fruitful hotbed for the propagation of plague.

In order to illustrate some of the methods resorted to to prevent the spread of the pest in town, I may remark that the mayor of the town

offered a premium of 5 cents a head for every rat that was killed in Port Louis. It seems that some of the vagrants about town collected a number of dead rats in the suburban towns, and carted them to a vacant lot in Port Louis. But it appears that the people of Port Louis informed the police of the trick.

The mayor then issued a new proclamation offering the reward to those only who would bring the rats alive to the city hall. It appears that a boy brought 2 live rats to the Hotel de Villa and demanded the premium for the live rodents. The payment was refused. The boy went away disgusted, killed the rats and threw them in the streets, where they were allowed to remain to the better honor of the inhabitants and the terror to those who passed the way, everyone was afraid to approach them. Finally the mayor had to find 2 brave policemen who summoned up courage enough to remove the rats, to the great relief of the neighborhood.

There is some talk of making a lazaretto quite near the consulate for the reception of suspects and convalescent patients. If this plan is carried out, I will be forced to remove the consulate if I can find other quarters. While I am not at all afraid or alarmed, yet I do not care to expose myself to any unnecessary danger or run any risk.

Since the beginning of this year there has been already shipped 3 cargoes of sugar to the States. The first left here by the steamship *Bansoto*, for Delaware Breakwater, January 7, 1899.

The American bark *W. B. Flint*, of New York, left this port in ballast January 21, 1899, via Cochin and India for New York. These two vessels had clean bills of health, as they left here before the detection of plague. The American bark *Samor*, of Boston, cleared from here February 3 with a cargo of sugar for Sandy Hook, and the British steamer *Creigearn* left on the 4th instant with a cargo of sugar for Delaware Breakwater. These 2 vessels have unclean bills of health.

Referring to instructions of Department circular dated October 31, 1898, calling attention of consuls to forward weekly sanitary reports, provided for in paragraph 375, section II, of the consular regulations, I have to inform the Department that I have none of the new forms, 1934b, on hand, and when, later on, if I can procure any definite information from the health department of Port Louis regarding the sanitary condition of the town and colony, I must use the old form, No. 167, which number I see from the new schedule for stationery requisitions now appertains to statements of official services necessarily rendered to American vessels and seamen.

In this connection I have to inform the Department that it is quite impossible, with the means at hand, to comply fully with the order of the circular. However, I will do the best I can to send the required information.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN P. CAMPBELL,
United States Consul.

Hon. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE.

[Inclosure.]

Correspondence—Destruction of rats at Port Louis.

PORT LOUIS, *February 7, 1899.*

SIR: The colony is at last thoroughly awakened to the sad truth that we are exposed to the imminent danger of an outbreak of the bubonic plague, and is prepared to support the government and sanitary authorities in the most strenuous and drastic measures which may be considered necessary to prevent the spread of or stamp out the

disease. However obscure may be the cause of its introduction, it appears to be well established tha rats are effective vehicles of contamination, and a war of extermination has been declared against them. Now rats swarm everywhere—especially where grain is stored—and if there is no direct evidence that plague germs can be imported in grain bags, there is no doubt whatever that grain bags attract rats in myriads, and common sense dictates that the latter should be attacked at the point most favorable to their destruction, viz, in the grain warehouses. Now there is nothing like the mongoose, or munguz, for the extermination of these vermin; a dozen pair of mongooses turned down in the docks would clear them out in an incredibly short time, and I imagine that there are enough rats in Port Louis to last for some time. After that planters might be glad to turn some down in the cane fields, and would save many thousands of rupees every year.

There are drawbacks about the animal, which will be found well described in a letter reprinted from the Field, in the Revue Agricole, No. 9, vol. 9, in September, 1895.

There need be no difficulty in keeping down their numbers if they multiply too prolifically, but, in the face of a common danger, incidental sufferings must be borne in common, and if ground game and partridges become rare our sportsmen will have the satisfaction of knowing that the colony flourishes at the expense of a few days loss to them of rather second-rate shooting, and many get some small compensation besides in an occasional snap shot at a stray pig, as recommended by the authorities. After all the mongoose may confine his attention to town rats, and I suggest that the sanitary authorities telegraph to India for a consignment of a dozen couple by the next British India boat.

Your obedient servant, COLONIA.

FOREIGN STATISTICAL REPORTS.

BERMUDA.—Week ended March 17, 1899. Estimated population, 15,013. One death. No contagious diseases.

Week ended March 31, 1899. One death. No contagious diseases.

BRAZIL—*Para.*—Month of December, 1898. Estimated population, 50,000. Total number of deaths, 124. No contagious diseases reported.

Month of January, 1899. Total number of deaths, 218. No contagious diseases reported.

Month of February. Total number of deaths, 210. No contagious diseases reported.

BRITISH HONDURAS—*Belize.*—Month of February, 1899. Estimated population, 30,000. Total number of deaths, 93, including 3 from whooping cough.

CANADA—*Winnipig, Manitoba.*—Month of March, 1899. Estimated population, 49,000. Total number of deaths not reported. One death from diphtheria and 2 from phthisis pulmonalis.

ITALY—*Florence.*—Month of January, 1899. Estimated population, 199,080. Total number of deaths, 415, including diphtheria, 2; enteric fever, 4; scarlet fever, 2; whooping cough, 2, and 35 from phthisis pulmonalis.

JAMAICA.—Two weeks ended March 18, 1899. Estimated population, 694,866. Number of deaths not reported. No contagious diseases reported. The health of the port is good.

JAVA—*Batavia.*—Month of January, 1899. Estimated population, 150,000. Number of deaths not reported. No contagious diseases reported.

MALTA.—Two weeks ended January 31, 1899. Estimated population, 180,328. Total number of deaths, 209, including diphtheria 1, and 4 from phthisis pulmonalis. Four cases of interic fever in army and fleet.

NICARAGUA—*San Juan.*—Month of March, 1899. Estimated population, 1,156. Total number of deaths, 7. No contagious diseases.